SENATOR PLATT'S PAPER

TOUCHING THE MOST VIRULENT PERIOD OF AMERICAN POLITICS.

It Was During the Administration of President John Adams When Political Animosity Pervaded Every Department of Life-An Exciting Scone-The First Personal Encounter in Congress Graphically in the Affair-A Paper Read by Senator O. H. Platt Last Night Before the New Haven Colony Historical Society.

New Haven Colony Historical society held last evening a large representation of New Haven's leading literary and soclety people being present, United States Senator Orville H. Platt read a most interesting paper entitled "The Encounter Between Roger Griswold and Mathew Lyon.'

During the meeting the following recent gifts to the society were announced: Part of the pulpit of the First church erected in East Haven in 1719 and afterwards used in the present Old Stone church until the close of the Revolutionary war, presented by Leverett S. Bagley, Esq.; a small mahogany table over one hundred years old, formerthe property of Mrs. Julia Wooster DeForest, presented by her granddaughter, Miss Ellen R. Griffin; fifty pamphlets and magazines, presented by

The names of Rev. Dr. J. E. Twitchell and Alderman Walter J. Connor were proposed for membership and will be

Professor Dexter of Yale will read a paper on "The First Public Library in New Haven" at the next meeting of the society, to be held the last Monday in November. This meeting will be the regular annual meeting and besides the regular election of officers the amendment to increase the number of vice presidents of the society from one so two will be acted upon.

SENATOR PLATT'S PAPER. Senator Platt's paper is given in full

as follows: The most virulent period of American olitics was reached during the admin istration of President John Adams, Political opponents were avowed personal enemies. Political rancor and animosity pervaded every department of life. In social as well asbusiness affairs, in religious and educational matters, the line was drawn between Federalists and anti-Federalists, indiscriminately called Democrats or Republicans. Neighbors met and passed each other without epeaking, and were ready to into passionate quarrels at the slightest provocation. Slander and viparaded to view. The meanest of motives were attributed to public men, and no slander or vulgarity was too ceive of the intensity of villfication

and the man to whom the present gen- militia company stationed on the fronmost bitterly and vilely assailed by the cused of aristocracy, of a desire to reof the people towards England, resultthose who did not look with favor 'pon after appear. the democracy which resulted in the French Revolution with its attendant horrors. The people naturally were friends of France and grateful for the assistance which had been rendered by her in the struggle of the colonies against Great Britain. So when the new era of democracy began in France, it was easy for the masses to sympathize with and attempt to imitate it in

this country. Naturally enough the spirit of license prevailed here as in France. The liberty pole surmounted by the cap was the expression in this country of an admiration for French democracy; and that it did not result here in the establishment of the guillotine and overthrow of the government is probably due to the fact that Jefferson who had sympathized with it, and as was asserted, encouraged the French Revolution, became alarmed at its excesses, and drew back firightened at the spirit thus

As a mild specimen of the newspaper comments of those days, the following extract from the Mirror of February 5,

1800, may be of local interest: "The Illuminati of New England are composed of certain ecclesiastics, who wish for political sway; and of laymen in office who wish for clerical influence to retain them in place; by the means of the pulpit and sword; or church and



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"The senators and representatives in dent. Mr. Dana, a member from Conongress from Connecticut belong to he New England Illuminati, and obey the president of Yale, who rules with the united power of a teacher and ecdesiastic. Mr. Hillhouse guides the tate treasury so far as to gain unlawful and unconstitutional grants of mon-

y for the Illuminati." "The wives of Messrs, Dwight, Hillhouse and Davenport of congress, are cousins; Messrs. Goodrich's are broth-Messrs. Wolcott of the Treasury and Griswold of congress are cousins as are Messrs, Griswold and Hillhouse Mr. Chauncy Goodrich married the sis ter of Mr. Oliver Wolcott; and Mr. Eleazar Goodrich married the sister of r. Allen, late of congress."

Thus are church and state, and the ties of blood and marriage, united to form an hierarchy and aristocracy in Connecticut, which some fail not to call monarchy, controled by Dr. Dwight, A desire for place, favor and power conducts this system. Mr. Tracy and his son-in-law at home are seeking for money and influence through this un-

Mr. Tracy wishes to be a foreign enroy. Mr. Eleazar Goodrich is looking or the place of collector of the customs in New Haven

President Dwight has a host of brothers, sons and cousins who want employment. His brother Theodore wants to be a district attorney and to have a seat in congress or the upper house in Connecticut.

Tapping Reeve one of the Illuminati. and one of the judges of the superior court, is a promoter of the tyranny assumed by the members of congress from Connecticut, in order to obtain the place of district judge.

The above is the clue to the sedition law; certain gentlemen did not wish to have their conduct and designs investigated at home; for this cause they have wished to destroy the editor of the Bee and introduce a system of terror.'

I call such extracts mild because the do not descend to the vulgarity and libelous scandal so prevalent at the

These preliminary remarks seem ne cessary for the proper understanding tate to declare they think him a mos of the circumstances surrounding the extraordinary beast." first personal encounter in congress bemembers. The special interest for Connecticut people lies in the fact that one of the actors was a member of the house of representatives from Connecticut.

Congress in 1798 sat in Philadelphia in Independence Hall. It was the same session at which the famous, or as they were soon regarded, the infamous alien and sedition laws were passed. The actors in the quarrel were Matthew Lyon of Vermont and Roger Griswold of Connecticut, both of them men noted in their way, but very diverse in their personal characteristics as well as in their political opinions,

Lyon was born in Ireland, and was at this time about fifty-six years of age. tuperation filled the press. The pri- He came over from Ireland in 1755 penwate life of officials and politicians was niless and friendless, and was sold to pay his passage, as the custom was in those days, to Mr. Liversworth, at Cambridge, Mass., the price paid being, loathsome to find a place in party jour-nals. It is difficult at this day to con-bull stags." Liversworth was a Vermonter, and Lyon was taken to then too common. It has been equaled home. He served out his time, received in no other period of our history, let us some New England schooling and fondly hope that it may never be repieced out his lack of education by good nature and enterprise. The wild This sad condition of public affairs and flerce spirit of the Vermonter of during the last two years of those days seems to have been imbibed General Washington's administration, by Lyon. He became an officer in a

eration looks only with veneration was tier under command of General Gates. Just before the battle of Saratoga party then organized against those and as Thanksgiving approached, the who were known as Federalists. The men began to depart for home, and in conservative men of the day were ac- a little while the officers followed them. They returned after Thanksgiving, but store the influence of England in this the result was a court-martial, in country; and the prejudice and hatred which Lyon was cashiered by General Gates, a circumstance the connection ing from long years of oppression and of which with the personal fracas in the house of representatives will here-

He became a paymaster in Seth Warner's regiment, but got into a quarrel with a brother officer, left the army and returned to Vermont, where his enterprise was manifest in starting the business of paper making, type casting, printing, publishing a newspaper, digging ore and the casting of iron-ware. The general assembly of Vermont authorized him to raise by lottery "six hundred bushels of wheat," which was the current money of those days, to enlarge his furnaces so as to cast "flatirons, spiders, bake-pans and dish-kettles." He also made nail rods and many other articles. He very nearly made the discovery of utilizing wood-in the making of paper. The paper upon which his newspaper, the "Scourge of

was elected to congress just in time to

take part in the legislation of the las

two years of Adams' administration.

He signalized himself upon his entry

in congress by asking to be excused

from joining in the procession which

should attend upon the President to

present the answer of the house to his

annual message, as it was the custom

to do in those days. The speech which he made in support of his motion was

characteristic of the man. Among

other things he is reported as saying: "He had no objection to gentlemen of high blood carrying this address. He had no pretensions to high blood, though he thought he had as good

blood as any of them, as he was born

of a fine, hale, healthy woman. Before

vesterday he had never heard of gen-

tlemen boasting of their blood in that

house. He could not say, it was true,

that he was descended from the bas-

tards of Oliver Cromwell, or his cour-

tiers, or from the Puritans, who pun-

ished their horses for breaking the Sabbath, or from those who persecuted

the Quakers or hanged the witches.

He could, however, say that this was

his country, because he had no other; and he owned a share of it, which he

had bought by means of honest indus-

try; he had fought for his country. In

every day of trouble he had repaired to

der it. Conquest had led his country to independence, and being indepen-

dent he called no man's blood in ques-

The motion which he made to be ex-

cused was carried unanimously, a re-

sult to be accounted for only upon the theory that it was designed to indicate

to him that his presence was not de

sired among the other representatives

who wished to attend upon the Presi-

standard and had conquered un-

he (the judge) had not seen at the President's more pomp and servants there than at the tavern at Rutland? To this no answer was given." Aristocracy and Repository of Impor-The newspaper report referring to the fact that the judge gave no answer to tant Political Truth," was printed was made from the bark of the basswood

the second question says: "The judge, conscious that there was ome difference between the table at He married the daughter of Gov

home for examination.

half a bed, made no reply, but smoked

necticut, replying to Mr. Lyon's speech

sarcastically said that "it was true

some of the most respectable men in

the United States had waited upon the

President in a similar way, yet if the

gentleman thought it would not com-

port with his own dignity to do it, he

His quarrel with Connecticut repre-

sentatives seem to date from the time

of this remark by Mr. Dana. He was

ists in many ways, and for that reason

was taken up and championed by the

emocratic members of the house

Federalist newspapers teemed with

oarse allusions, and many very poor

ouns on his name indicated that he was

the estimation of his aristocratic oppo-

Cobbett in Porcupines Gazette, June

6th, 1797, saluted his entrance in con-

"The Lyon of Vermont, To-morroy

morning at eleven o'clock will be ex-

posed to view the Lyon of Vermont

This singular animal is said to have

een caught in the bog of Hibernia, and

when a whelp transported to America;

curlosity induced a New Yorker to buy

im, and moving into the country after-

wards exchanged him for a yoke of

young bulls with a Vermontese, He

was petted in the neighborhood of Gov-

omesticated that a daughter of his ex-

ellency would stroke and play with

alm as a monkey. He differs consider-

ablyfrom the African lion, is more clam-

rous and less magnanimous. His pelt

esembles more the welf or the tiger

and his gestures bear a remarkable af

inity to the bear; this may, however

habit of associating with that species

of wild beasts on the mountains. He is

carniverous, but not very ferocious, has

never been detected in having attacked

a man, but report says he will beat

vomen. He was brought to this city

in a wagon and has several days ex-

posed himself to the public. It has

been motioned to cage him. Many gen-

demen who have seen him do not hest-

He seems to have been possessed of a

good deal of common sense, great bold

tess of speech and an utter disregard

or forms and proprieties-a democra

of the democrats, and with his Irish

He was the first man tried for a viola.

tion of the alien and sedition laws, and

was convicted and sentenced to pay a

fine of one thousand dollars and be im-

prisoned four months. While suffering

this imprisonment he was re-elected to

congress. He thus served through two

Vermont. Subsequently he removed t

Kentucky and was elected a represen

tative from that state. He served four

erms as a member from Kentucky, th

democratic party being dominant in the

house during that period. He seems to

have been a prominent and honored

member, and to have lost much of his

He was offered the position of com

missary of the western army, but de-

elined it. In Kentucky as in Vermont

he withdrew voluntarily from a seat in

the house, and soon after was appoint-

Cherokee nation. He went to Arkan-

sas, where he was elected a delegate to

congress from the territory, but did not

An incident in his trial for violation

of the alien and sedition laws seems cu

rious to those who understand the dig-

nity now maintained in United States

courts. The libelous matter which was

charged contained a sentence which ac

cused President Adams of "an un

bounded thirst for ridiculous pomp.

oolish adulation and selfish avarice.'

Lyon had no counsel and conducted his

own case. One point of his defense was

that the alleged libelous matter was

rue, and to sustain that he called upon

Judge Patterson, the presiding judge,

to testify. And the account of the trial

"Judge Patterson was then asked by

the defendant whether he had not fre-

quently 'dined with the President, and

observed his ridiculous pomp and pa-

"Judge Patterson replied that he had

sometimes, though rarely, dined with

the President, but that he had never

seen any pomp or parade; he had seen

on the contrary a great deal of plain-

"The defendant then asked whether

proceeds as follows:

ness and simplicity.

rade?'

ed by President Munroe factor for the

roughness and acerbity of temper.

ongresses as a representative from

blood, ready for a row at all times.

ascribed to his having been in th

ernor Chittenden and soon became s

nents.

better than a beast in

ade a butt of ridicule by the Federal-

ped he would be excused.

The full account of the trial and of Lyon's imprisonment would be most in eresting, but there is no room for it in my present paper. In 1840 congress made an appropriation to repay the amount of the fine to Lyon's heirs.

The other combarant in this contest vas Roger Griswold, of Connecticut, an intense and influential Federalist, man with an honorable family, and with an honorable record in Connectiout history.

He was the son of Gov. Matthew Griswold, of Connecticut, whose wife was Ursula Wolcott, sister of Oliver Wolcott, signer of the Declaration o Independence. Probably no family cirsle in Connecticut ever contained so many distinguished men as the family sircle of Ursula Wolcott Griswold, mother of Roger Griswold, comprising as it has sixteen governors, including Governor (now President) Grover Cleve land, and forty-three judges, among whom was the late Chief Justice Waite. Roger Griswold's wife was Fanny Rogers, who was the thirty-fourth to from Egbert, the West Saxon king. In the matter of blood and bearing there could scarcely be greater difference than between the actors in the contest to be described.

Roger Griswold was elected represen tative to congress in 1794, being then thirty-two years of age. He was con ous in the debates, ranking New England perhaps second only Fisher Ames in the defense of the meas ares of the Federalists. He was thus about thirty-six years of age at the time when the controversy between him and Lyon occurred. He held the posttion of representative in congress ten years. In 1801 he was appointed Secretary of War by President Adams, but leclined the honor. He was made a judge of the superior court of Connectleut in 1807, which office he held two years, when he was elected by the leg slature lleutenant-governor, holding the office two years, and then was elected governor of the state, which office he held at the time of his death. Octobe

25th, 1812. As governor he declined to obey equisition of Major General Dearborn authorized by the Secretary of War for the orders of the United States officers ipon the ground that the constitution ild not warrant the requisition. His action in this respect was advised by the council which then constituted th upper branch of the state legislature The leading men of New England o that period were credited with the p sible intention of withdrawing the N England states from the Union, and I is alleged that in case of such an even the name of Roger Griswold had been canvassed as that of a proper person assume the presidency of the state which should secede. I must be pe mitted, however, to say that my reading of history leads me to conclude tha there never was any real intention of the part of New England to secede that the "secession talk" of that period was a matter of theory only, and that the men who participated in the Hartford convention never intended to carry their theory into practice.

Such then were the combatants in the irst quarrel in congress characterized by actual violence, which I will now briefly describe.

On the 30th day of January, 1798, the house of representatives had ballotted or managers of the impeachment of William Blount, and the tellers were engaged in counting the ballots. The Federalist speaker, Jonathan Dayton of usual on occasions, and was sitting in a member's seat near the bar of the among whom was Griswold, Lyon was standing outside of the bar and was talking with the speaker. Dana, also

a Connecticut member, and Lyon be came engaged in a conversation, which was disputatious and somewhat warm. The speaker said to them pleasantly, "Gentlemen,keep yourselves cool; you proceed much furthr you will want seconds." Upon this Lyon turned to the speaker and said that he thought Mr. Dana ought to be sent as an ambassa dor to Cayenne. And thereupon the speaker, with the idea as he said in his testimony, of giving a pleasant turn to the conversation, said that perhaps he Lyon, would like a mission to Kam schatka among the fured tribes. Evidently, however, this was in the nature

of a pun on Lyon's name. Lyon was somewhat heated, and began reflection: upon the conduct of the Connecticut members, said that they were acting in opposition to the wishes of nine-tenths of their people; that they were acting in their own interest; that they were seeking offices for themselves; that if they could not obtain the most lucra tive, they would not refuse those which were less so; that he had a good right to know the people of Connecticut, for (Continued on Seventh Page.)

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